

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION

Bisley General Meeting

Minutes of the Bisley General Meeting

held in the NRA Pavilion, Bisley
on Wednesday 20th July 2022 from 9.00pm

Present:

Chairman:	Mr D Lacey
Secretary General	Mr A Mercer
Treasurer	Mr A Reynolds
Members:	14 Registered

BISLEY GENERAL MEETING

Notice of the Bisley General Meeting

The notice of the Meeting was taken as read.

ITEM 1 - SPEECHES

The Speech of the Chairman is attached hereto and initialled by the Chairman.

ITEM 2 - OPEN FORUM


Chairman

Proceedings

Welcome to the Bisley General Meeting of 2022.

I am joined this evening by Andrew Reynolds, our Treasurer and Andrew Mercer, our Secretary General.

I would like start by welcoming all our Vice-Presidents who have either been here, are here or are coming here.

I would particularly like to welcome those from overseas – Stan Frost from Canada, Philippe Ginestet from France and Colin Mallett from Jersey.

We started the Imperial 2022 with the Military Adaptive Championship on 23rd June. It was both uplifting and humbling to talk with these young, and not-so-young competitors from all three Services. Their determination and positive approach in the face of life-changing injuries sustained while serving our country is an inspiration. The event brings together a like-minded camaraderie but is also very competitive, as you would expect.

The winner of the Veteran Military Adaptive Championship this year was Ryan Goodman with a score of 329.27v. The Serving Military Adaptive winner was Nick di Vita with 322.26v.

At the same time the Services were finishing their Operational Shooting Competitions and we are delighted to recognise the recipients of the respective Queen's Medal for 2022:

Warrant Officer First Class Geoff Kendall, Royal Navy
Sergeant Dhanprasad Ghale, 1 Royal Gurkha Regiment
Rifleman Mark Burgess, 7 Rifles
Corporal Nathaniel Webb, Royal Air Force

The Civilian Service Rifle meeting that followed continues to grow, with 143 individual competitors. The class winners were:

Historic	Seth Ellett
Iron Sight	Sean Clarke
Practical Optic	Nick Stirrup
Service Optic	Roy Wade

A record 43 teams competed in the Falling Plates competition, which was staged on Pirbright ranges. Shot in two classes, the winners of the Modern was Hunters NRPC, while the British Young Shooters Association won a closely fought Historic final to notch up the first team trophy for the BYSA – and a popular win it was too.

The CSR Meeting culminated in the Methuen Cup, which saw 20 teams competing, including for the first time in its history, an all ladies team.



The Lee Enfield Rifle Association won the Historic Class with 788 points, while the London Practical Shooting Club won the Practical Class with 1381 points.

During the evening of the following day, Monday 4th July, a heathland fire was reported on the north western edge of the range danger area. It spread quickly overnight and the following day, and was raging through the top of Stickledown and surrounding areas. NRA staff assisted the Surrey Fire & Rescue Service to limit the path of the fire where possible, but it soon became clear that some of the planned competitions could not take place. With a heavy heart, we were forced to cancel the Match Rifle Meeting, F Class Meeting, Historic Arms, Sporting Rifle and the Inter Services Cadet Rifle Meeting.

As the fires abated to some extent, repairs to reinstate the devastated number boards on Stickledown became the immediate priority. Volunteers from the shooting community made a huge contribution to ensure we got the job done in 48 hours. Our sincere thanks go to everyone who made the extraordinary effort in challenging conditions.

As work on the ranges continued, another team of volunteers acted as Fire Marshalls, operating daily from 08.00 until 22.00. Working in shifts, they were kept very busy dousing and beating down numerous flare-ups on Stickledown and Cottesloe Heath. The work was strenuous and tiring, and their contribution meant we could plan to re-open on the Monday.

I would like to pass the grateful thanks of all competitors to every one of the volunteers.

While it was impossible to do anything with the lost Imperial competitions, the Match Rifle and F Class communities arranged their own competitions during First Monday to First Wednesday, including a handicap format and ad hoc team shoots, making the best out of a difficult situation. I applaud their initiative, particularly in ensuring our international visitors experienced some competitive shooting.

So last Monday we resumed the Imperial Meeting with the Schools' Meeting and McQueen competitions getting underway.

There were 29 schools, with 329 cadets taking part. The Ashburton Shield was won by Bradfield College - the first time in 32 years - with a score of 691.22v. And a very popular win it was too, both for the College and the coach Steve Bates. Well done to all involved!

The Imperial Gallery Rifle meeting had over 90 competitors, with over 951 competitions shot. Our thanks go to Ash Dagger as Match Director, Liz Smoothy and Susan Luton for stats and all the administration, and all the volunteer range officers who helped organise this very enjoyable and relaxed event.

The McQueen competition, sponsored by Accuracy International, had a very successful meeting attracting 138 competitors shooting 571 competitions. I would like to thank Martin and Mary Camp for the smooth running of this popular competition.



The winner of McQueen A – the issued rifle class – was Simon Walker. The winner of both the Cadet prize and the Under-25s was Oscar Deakin – my congratulations to Oscar and all the class winners.

Overall Target Rifle has 846 entries, with 186 of those from overseas. We have teams and individuals from Australia, Canada, Channel Islands, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Guyana, India, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Netherlands, Singapore, South Africa, Spain and the United States.

The Grand Aggregate has 657 entries. The final day of the competition produced challenging winds at all distances. Parag Patel produced a stunning performance to win with a score of 569.66v, pipping Alexander Coetzee into second by a single point, followed by David Luckman in third with 567.80v.

74 Under-25s and 197 Under 21s are competing, making up about 32% of total entries. This is very encouraging and our special thanks go to the school staff involved and our friends at the Council for Cadet Rifle Shooting with whom we have an excellent working relationship.

The youngest shooter is Aaron Patel at 14, son of Parag Patel, Commonwealth Gold Medal winner, Queen's Prize Winner, Grand Aggregate Winner and GB Team shooter – so not much to live up to! The eldest shooter is John Marshall from Canada who is 91 years old and celebrating 8 decades at Bisley!

We wish all the best to David Richards with his Kolapore team on Friday, and extend good luck to all teams and competitors for the remainder of the Meeting.

Now I would like to extend my thanks to those who have worked very hard over the last 5 weeks of competitions.

To our Chief Range Officers: Peter Turner, John Miller, Lisa Railton and Rob Hughes.

To the MoD and Landmarc teams at Pirbright, particularly for their excellent support during the heath fires.

To our Chief of Staff, David Camp, Chief Butts Officers, Colin Scoles on Century and Tom Hampshire and Rose Pettet on Stickledown, and all the RCOs and Butt supervisors who have kept things going for us. My sincere thanks also go to all the markers who have done such a sterling job in all the butts during some particularly hot and demanding conditions.

To the staff who have prepared the Camp and Ranges to receive so many visitors throughout the competition.

To the team of volunteers who have opened the Museum.



I would also like to thank the front counter team for ensuring that everyone had their squadding cards on time, the Stats team who have produced all the results, the Range Office, Armoury and ammunition issuing staff who have ensured the ranges run smoothly, as well as all those working diligently behind the scenes to ensure a successful Imperial Meeting for all.

We also had elections for positions on General Council this year. The following people have been elected to General Council:

Mrs Karen Robertson with 1361 votes
Mr Iain Thomson with 1243 votes
Mr Mike Jenvey with 1213 votes
Mr Charles Perry with 1018 votes
Mr Derek Lowe with 917 votes

I would like to congratulate all the successful candidates and thank them for agreeing to contribute to the work of the NRA by serving on General Council. I would also like to thank everyone who put themselves forward as candidates.

I now throw the meeting open to the floor. If anybody would like to ask any questions or make any statements. If there is anyone, we have plenty of time and microphones set up. I'd ask anybody to introduce themselves for the minutes.

Dr Robin Pizer

Mr Chairmen and members, my name is Robin Pizer.

I and others still have grave concerns about some aspects of the NRA Disciplinary Process.

By example, in 2018 the NRA Disciplinary Panel convicted me of crimes I had not committed. My appeal hearing was delayed, I say deliberately, until 7 months after the imposed ban on coming to Bisley had expired. I quote the Appeal Panel conclusion that:

- "the Secretary General on behalf of the NRA as prosecuting officer had participated in the decision making deliberations of the original Disciplinary Panel and had made significant contributions to their discussions and the penalty awarded.
- The effect of those contributions had influenced and/or guided the original panel in coming to their decision.
- This was contrary to the long established principles of natural justice."

So the Appeal Panel quashed the decision of the Disciplinary Panel.

I have listened to a tape recording of the private discussions of the Disciplinary Panel. The Secretary General intervened at least 18 times either at the invitation of the Chairman of the Disciplinary Body or of his own accord. Each intervention was to require a harsher punishment than any others and he got his way.



In July 2019 the Chairman of the Disciplinary Body was asked by a lay member of the Disciplinary Body about the role of the Secretary General in the private discussions and was told 'The Secretary General has been present during the deliberations of the Disciplinary Committee in all cases since his arrival in 2012. He takes no part in the discussion nor the decision of the Disciplinary Committee'. This was untrue and is why the said Chairman of the Disciplinary Body resigned soon after the Appeal Panel made their decision as lawyers are not to say untrue things to other lawyers.

I turned to the Designated Trustee in the hope of getting clarification on reasons for delay and failure to answer questions, in particular, one question I asked 9 times up to June 2019 when the Chairman of the Disciplinary Body gave an answer, which if given 22 months earlier, it is highly unlikely that any disciplinary hearing would have been initiated.

One of the new Trustees was given the task. Their report and decisions showed that said Trustee did not know how to conduct an inquiry and gave no indication that said Trustee had asked to see the NRA files or been given access to the NRA files. The conclusion was that I had provided no evidence to support my assertions. I find it astonishing that the Designated Trustee could say something untrue to come to their conclusion.

I am certain, as are others, that the Designated Trustee is designed to find against those who criticise fellow trustees and senior staff.

At this point Colin McEachran tried to get an apology from the NRA Trustees for my treatment. Shortly before his death he knew he had failed as the NRA Chairman said 'It is important that the Disciplinary Body operates independently of Council and that members have confidence that disciplinary proceedings are not influenced by Trustees.' Colin's last email said to me (in part) 'I am very sorry to say that my email has not produced even a smidgin of an apology. Your treatment leaves a nasty taste in the mouth.'

At the NRA AGM this year the Second Schedule was changed so that the Chairman of the Disciplinary Body no longer automatically was a Trustee. While this is to be applauded a loophole was inserted that a member of the Disciplinary Body could become a Trustee. This shows a cynical disregard for the need of the Disciplinary Body and all disciplinary processes to be independent of the Trustees contrary to the claim of the NRA Chairman to Colin McEachran.

Have you seen the disciplinary notice on the NRA Notice Board? It records the decision of last April of a case involving a man and the alleged sexually inappropriate behaviour towards two teenage girls. It states that the evidence did not support the allegations.

So far as I am aware the NRA does not have the resources to investigate this type of allegation and such allegations must be reported to the Police.



In conclusion that is why the NRA needs to make a public statement that between December 2012 and April 2020 all guilty decisions of the Disciplinary Body are null and void in those cases where the Secretary General of the NRA as prosecuting officer participated in the decision making deliberations of the Disciplinary Panel or Appeal Panel.

The NRA needs to redefine the role of the current Designated Trustee so that it is a Designated Person who is neither a Trustee nor a member of the Disciplinary Body AND has recent experience of investigating events where the facts are disputed.

The NRA needs to delete the option that a person can be both a Trustee and a member of the Disciplinary Body at the same time.

The NRA needs to report allegations of inappropriate sexual behaviour to the Police.

Thank you for listening.

Chairman:

Thank you Robin. I am conscious that there weren't any questions there. Did you want to ask any questions, otherwise I'm grateful for your comments.

Robin Pizer:

Are you going to do anything about the recommendations that I'm making?

Chairman:

I haven't had advance notice of the comments and it would be wrong of me to give an 'off the cuff' response to these quite serious points.

Robin Pizer:

Well they are very serious problems that have gone wrong with the Disciplinary Body over this period of time. I was shown what you need to do and I hope and pray that you will have the courage to do it.

Chairman:

Thank you for your comments Robin.

Is there anybody else who would like to make any statements or ask any questions?

John Webster:

I would just like to make one statement.

I would like to endorse, on behalf of the participants in the Imperial Meeting, the really hard work and fantastic contribution of the staff, the markers, and the NRA has



made to get over the problems of the fire in the danger area and to present a fantastic Meeting.

I can certainly tell you in my feedback from fellow members that the staff, the marking and everything has gone so well that they are incredibly grateful for all the hard work that we all know has been going on, and there's been some fantastic contributions, unpaid dare I say contributions by members of staff working late into the night in difficult and dangerous and tiring circumstances, and at the end of a very long Imperial Meeting, and I would just like to endorse your thanks to them on behalf of the floor at this meeting.

Hear hear – round of applause.

Chairman:

Thank you very much John.

Paul Charlton:

I'm Paul Charlton, I'm a member of the Stock Exchange Rifle Club and many other clubs here.

I've listened to Robin's statement with disappointment because I cannot in all honesty defend myself as a member of the Disciplinary Body without breaching the trust that is imparted on me and my fellow members of the Disciplinary Body to keep secret those matters that we are presented with in confidence.

And I cannot say any more, other than the extraordinary anger that I have that I have been in some way impuined to have been led like a horse to water to reach a particular decision, when faced with evidence that I could not ignore in reaching my decision.

And I think that's all I can say because I am confined by the rules under which the Disciplinary Body operates.

John Webster:

We hear you loud and clear!

Round of applause

Chairman:

Any other questions or statements from the floor?

If there's not, I will thank everyone for attending.

Thank you all very much for coming along this evening.

The meeting closed at 9.25pm

